



Bologna Seminar on “Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society”

(Salzburg, 3-5 February 2005)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ministers meeting in Berlin in September 2003 added an Action Line to the Bologna process entitled “*European Higher Education Area and European Research Area – two pillars of the knowledge based society*” that underlines the key role of doctoral programmes and research training in this context.

“Conscious of the need to promote closer links between the EHEA and the ERA in a Europe of Knowledge, and of the importance of research as an integral part of higher education across Europe, Ministers consider it necessary to go beyond the present focus on two main cycles of higher education to include the doctoral level as the third cycle in the Bologna Process. They emphasise the importance of research and research training and the promotion of interdisciplinarity in maintaining and improving the quality of higher education and in enhancing the competitiveness of European higher education more generally. Ministers call for increased mobility at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels and encourage the institutions concerned to increase their cooperation in doctoral studies and the training of young researchers.”

2. Research training and research career development - and the need to increase the number of highly qualified graduates and well trained researchers – are also becoming increasingly important in the debate on strengthening Europe’s research capacity and in the discussions on FP7.

3. In order to raise awareness of the issues and provide a solid basis for the discussions the EUA launched in 2004 a Socrates funded Doctoral Programmes Project to analyse key issues related to structure and organisation, financing, quality and innovative practice in doctoral programmes. 49 Universities from 25 countries are involved in this project that demonstrates the commitment of the universities and their desire to contribute directly to the wider policy debate on this important issue.

4. Aware of the importance of this topic for both governments and universities and bearing in mind that research training forms a core mission of universities across Europe, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the European University Association have taken the initiative to organise a ‘Bologna Seminar’ in Salzburg on doctoral programmes in order to reach a set of conclusions, identify key challenges and make recommendations for action to be undertaken (in the period 2005-2007).

5. The enormous interest in and presence at the Seminar of the academic community further demonstrates the ownership felt by universities across the continent for the organisation of doctoral programmes and research training.

6. Furthermore, participants welcomed the initiative of the European Commission to draft a 'European Charter for Researchers'/Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers'.

7. From the discussions in Salzburg a consensus emerged on **a set of ten basic principles** as follows:

- i. **The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research.** At the same time it is recognised that doctoral training must increasingly meet the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia.
- ii. **Embedding in institutional strategies and policies:** universities as institutions need to assume responsibility for ensuring that the doctoral programmes and research training they offer are designed to meet new challenges and include appropriate professional career development opportunities.
- iii. **The importance of diversity:** the rich diversity of doctoral programmes in Europe - including joint doctorates - is a strength which has to be underpinned by quality and sound practice.
- iv. **Doctoral candidates as early stage researchers:** should be recognized as professionals – with commensurate rights - who make a key contribution to the creation of new knowledge.
- v. **The crucial role of supervision and assessment:** in respect of individual doctoral candidates, arrangements for supervision and assessment should be based on a transparent contractual framework of shared responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors and the institution (and where appropriate including other partners).
- vi. **Achieving critical mass:** Doctoral programmes should seek to achieve critical mass and should draw on different types of innovative practice being introduced in universities across Europe, bearing in mind that different solutions may be appropriate to different contexts and in particular across larger and smaller European countries. These range from graduate schools in major universities to international, national and regional collaboration between universities.
- vii. **Duration:** doctoral programmes should operate within an appropriate time duration (three to four years full-time as a rule).
- viii. **The promotion of innovative structures:** to meet the challenge of interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills
- ix. **Increasing mobility:** Doctoral programmes should seek to offer geographical as well as interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility and international collaboration within an integrated framework of cooperation between universities and other partners.
- x. **Ensuring appropriate funding:** the development of quality doctoral programmes and the successful completion by doctoral candidates requires appropriate and sustainable funding.

Recommendations

Participants recommend to the BFUG:

- That the ten principles outlined above provide the basis for the further work of the BFUG and thus feed into the drafting of the Bergen Communiqué
- That the Ministers in Bergen then call on EUA **through its members** to prepare a report under the responsibility of the BFUG on the further development of these principles to be presented to Ministers in 2007.

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